

Raven Row  
56 Artillery Lane  
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ravenrow.org

*Some May Work as Symbols: Art Made in Brazil, 1950s–70s*

**29 February to 28 April 2024**

A rich diversity of artistic approaches existed in Brazil in the decades around the mid-twentieth century, after the first modernist wave had settled. This exhibition finds conversations between various forms of abstraction, symbolism and figuration that were circulating and interacting in the visual culture of that time. The abstract geometries produced by the concretists and neo-concretists in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro – Judith Lauand, Lygia Clark, Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Pape amongst them – are now internationally celebrated. The Afro-Brazilian symbology developed in the same period by artists such as Mestre Didi, Abdias Nascimento and Rubem Valentim, often referring to Candomblé and other spiritual practices, was no less pioneering. Also brought into dialogue are depictions of street scenes, domestic life and agricultural labour – perennially popular genres in Brazilian art, which are elaborated in the compositions of Silvia de Leon Chalreo, the theatrical stagings of Heitor dos Prazeres, and the expressive textiles of Madalena dos Santos Reinbolt.

Made in collaboration with the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro (MAM Rio), *Some May Work as Symbols* reflects on some of the absences or exclusions in Brazilian art historiography. Presenting work of dazzling quality by thirty artists, much of which has never been seen in the UK before, this exhibition draws principally on four museum collections – MAM Rio; Museu Afro Brasil Emanuel Araujo, in São Paulo; the Museum of Contemporary Art, University of São Paulo; and the Museum of Modern Art of Bahia – as well as private collections. *Some May Work as Symbols* is curated by Pablo Lafuente, artistic director of MAM Rio, and Thiago de Paula Souza, independent curator and researcher.

Artists in the exhibition: Maria Auxiliadora (1935–74); Lula Cardoso Ayres (1910–87); Genaro de Carvalho (1926–71); Aluísio Carvão (1920–2001); Amilcar de Castro (1920–2002); Willys de Castro (1926–88); Silvia de Leon Chalreo (1905–91); Lygia Clark (1920–88); João José Costa (1931–2014); Mário Cravo Junior (1923–2018); Milton Dacosta (1915–88); Mestre Didi (1917–2013); Djanira (1914–79); Hermelindo Fiaminghi (1920–2004); Judith Lauand (1922–2022); Almir Mavignier (1925–2018); Abdias Nascimento (1914–2011); César Oiticica (1939–); Hélio Oiticica (1937–80); Lygia Pape (1927–2004); Heitor dos Prazeres (1898–1966); Madalena dos Santos Reinbolt (1919–77); Luiz Sacilotto (1924–2003); Ione Saldanha (1921–2001); Dionísio del Santo (1925–99); Agnaldo dos Santos (1926–62); Ivan Serpa (1923–73); Elisa Martins da Silveira (1912–2001); Rubem Valentim (1922–91); Alfredo Volpi (1896–1988).

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Image captions

For all press enquiries, and high resolution images, contact Sam Talbot e: [sam@sam-talbot.com](mailto:sam@sam-talbot.com) t: 07725184630



01. Rubem Valentim, *Emblema – Logotipo Poético* [Emblem – poetic logotype], 1975.jpg

Rubem Valentim, *Emblema – Logotipo Poético* [Emblem – poetic logotype], 1975  
Courtesy Museu Afro Brasil Emanoel Araujo  
Photograph by João Liberato



02. Heitor dos Prazeres, *Untitled*, 1965.tif

Heitor dos Prazeres, *Untitled*, 1965  
Courtesy Almeida & Dale Galeria de Arte  
© the Estate of Heitor dos Prazeres  
Photograph by Sergio Guerini



03. Mestre Didi, *Sasará Olá no 11*, 1986.jpg

Mestre Didi, *Sasará Olá no 11*, 1986  
Courtesy Museu Afro Brasil Emanoel Araujo  
Photograph by Ricardo Morais



04. Willys de Castro, *Composição VI: Distribuição rítmica sobre um sistema modulado* [Composition VI: Rhythmic distribution over a modulated system], 1953.tif

Willys de Castro, *Composição VI: Distribuição rítmica sobre um sistema modulado* [Composition VI: Rhythmic distribution over a modulated system], 1953  
Courtesy the Estate of Willys de Castro  
Photograph by Romulo Fialdini

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05. Ivan Serpa, *Forma em evolução* [Form in evolution], 1952.tif

Ivan Serpa, *Forma em evolução* [Form in evolution], 1952  
Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro Collection  
Photograph by Jaime Acioh



06. Elisa Martins da Silveira, *Carnaval* [Carnival], 1952.tif

Elisa Martins da Silveira, *Carnaval* [Carnival], 1952  
Museu de Arte Moderna do Rio de Janeiro Collection  
Photograph by Rafael Adorján



07. Abdias Nascimento, *Mediation n. 2: Apis, the Sacred Bull*, 1973.tif

Abdias Nascimento, *Mediation n. 2: Apis, the Sacred Bull*, 1973  
Courtesy Afro-Brazilian Studies and Research Institute (IPEAFRO) / Museu de Arte Negra [Black Art Museum] Collection



08. Madalena dos Santos Reinbolt, *Untitled*, 1969–77.tif

Madalena dos Santos Reinbolt, *Untitled*, 1969–77  
Tapestry  
Edmar Pinto Costa Collection